Book Reviews

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Daphne Berdahl. *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999. 294pp. ISBN 0-520-21476-5 US$ 45.00 (cloth), ISBN 0-520-21477-3 US$ 16.95 (paper).

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In the last decade, anthropologists in Eastern Europe have faced new dilemmas. Rapid social change has demolished older models of cultural and symbolic stability, while narratives touting the triumph of Western-style 'modernity' discount the diversity of trajectories and experiences with 'the transition.' In response, a new transition ethnography is revealing the ambiguous and contested character of 'modernization,' while establishing social change as a valid topic of anthropological inquiry. One rather conspicuous dimension of change has been the reconfiguration of borders. To date, however, there has been surprisingly little study of postsocialist boundary shifts and their cultural consequences. In this context, Daphne Berdahl's *Where the World Ended* contributes a welcome and original exploration of the East German transition in a border village and its relation to the reconfiguration of boundaries and identities in 'the borderland.'

To signal the distinctiveness of the German borderland, Berdahl adopts the term *Zwischenraum* ("interstitial space") to name "the space between the boundaries of the known in which people negotiated the limits of the possible and, in so doing, helped define them" (p. 8). Like the well-known "borderland" concept of Renato Rosaldo, *Zwischenraum* has both geographic and symbolic connotations. For Berdahl, it is distinguished above all by its relation to political barrier, but it also includes cultural interpretations that give the latter meaning and power before and after its removal. In contrast to Rosaldo's "borderland" or related concepts like "hybridity," Berdahl's *Zwischenraum* is not a realm where essentialism and binary oppositions are potentially subverted. Instead, it is a space where negotiation and contestation help define, essentialize, and deepen symbolic boundaries—a space where, as she puts it, "ambiguity produces clarity."

Berdahl's story begins in Kella (its real name), village in the heart of the Eichsfeld region—a Catholic island amid Lutheran Protestantism since the Reformation. Over the centuries, the village changed hands many times before falling to the Allies in 1945 and being ceded to Soviet authorities soon after. The sealing of the border in 1952 perched such border villages "at the end of the world" until reunification finally thrust them into the geographic center of the new Germany. Having begun her research in 1990, Berdahl uses oral and archival sources to reconstruct everyday life in a village lodged in the GDR's *Schützstreifen* (defense strip) for almost four decades. Her focus is on how cultural practices helped negotiate and define different sorts of boundaries, such as between people and state, orthodox and popular religion, Party and Church. The border itself became the object of legends, imaginings, and cautiously resistive practices that transcended, but sometimes reinforced, its intended political function. Thus, tales of failed escape attempts helped set the "limits of the possible," adding to the border's appearance of impenetrability, while personal encounters with bureaucracy left villagers searching for the *raison d'etat* behind inexplicable decisions.

Berdahl wishes to demonstrate that the villagers were not entirely powerless, in spite of daunting odds. Some secretly resisted state legitimation strategies, she shows, by hanging mandatory national flags where they could not be seen by Westerners peering through the "window to Kella" (the book's cover affords us this hilltop view as it later looked). In devoutly Catholic Kella, the faithful also looked to religion as a platform for non-compliance with official norms, as when youngsters refused *Jugendweihe*, the socialist rite of

passage, on religious grounds. Others found their niche by agreeing to monitor their neighbors as *Grenzhelfer* (border helpers) or as anonymous lay informants for the secret police.

In interpreting such activities, Berdahl carefully avoids tendentious pigeonholes that see only 'victims' and 'perpetrators' under the old regime. Following the lead of *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life), she insists that quotidian practices mounted "a simultaneous contestation and affirmation of the regime" (p. 71). Her approach is partly persuasive, though one has the sense that most of the time these practices did neither. Moreover, opportunities for dissent are often coopted beforehand, as when criticism is channeled through sanctioned outlets like *Eingaben* (grievance petitions), town meetings, and seasonal cabarets. Her assertion at the end of Chapter 2 that everyday life "both helped constitute state power and contributed to its collapse" (*ibid.*) is somewhat surprising, as we have seen little that might have destabilized the political order. On balance, however, she seems to find that most villagers were neither activists nor ideologues; instead, their main concern was to establish a sanctuary where they could manage daily life with a modicum of autonomy and occasionally win symbolic concessions.

Convincingly, she shows that the well-fortified and mysterious border was more porous than some Westerner's used to think. Ties to the West could be sustained through correspondence and care packages, and television images became legally viewable, though officially discouraged, after 1971. Access to Western goods, as well as "connections," Church offices, and cash reserves, undermined socialist collectivism to some extent, distinguishing local notables with nicknames like "J.R." from their neighbors. The crux of her story arrives with the fall of the Wall in Berlin in November 1989. Though witnessed from afar, the event instantly transformed Kella, eliminating travel restrictions and ending decades of isolation from both West and East. It also inaugurated a transition between political states, which Berdahl likens to "liminality." Like a coming of age ritual, reunification is seen as a passage from past to future in which identities and boundaries must be renegotiated and where inhabitants strive for lucidity "amid the chaos and failures of transition" (p. 232).

Upon her arrival, the author finds a number of projects underway that remold the personal and collective past for new times. The village *Heimatverein* (heritage association), which long promoted regional and confessional identity around the Eichsfeld, stages a commemorative unity parade featuring familiar stereotypes: officious border guards, plaintive would-be escapees, and intransigent heads of state. Other parishioners are seeking to memorialize Kella's "faith and suffering" under socialism by restoring religious markers like seventh Station of the Cross and a cordoned-off chapel. Such representations, she insists, are not simply obsessions with a bygone era, as some have argued; like the everyday practices of the past, they both contest and affirm present-day realities.

This celebratory mood changes in the midst of her two-year stint in Kella, due in part of economic disaster. In 1991, a toy factory and a suspender-clip factory, which had employed two-thirds of the town's working adults, shuts down for good. Some workers are urged into early retirement or secure new jobs in the West, but with the closing of nurseries, day-care centers, and after-school programs, women in particular are often excluded from full-time employment. In the aftermath, multiple gender ideologies compete for the hearts and minds of female residents, but also interact with the East-West cleavage. Thus, West German and Catholic images of motherhood make a virtue of separate spheres, while socialist and Western feminist egalitarianism claim vindication in defeat. For some informants, Western-style recreational shopping offers a welcome alternative to their former "worker-mother" role, while others choose to don their distinctive *Kittel* (smocks) again, the old symbol of the woman worker and now an expression of *Ossi* (Eastern) pride.

This new East German particularism is one of the more puzzling consequences of reunification. Though the reasons are still hotly debated, fresh perspectives are in short supply. Berdahl's own take is not entirely unique, but it is plausible in many ways. In her view, *Ossi* identity is provoked by the hegemony of Western culture and norms (pp. 181, 232) that devalue and marginalize anything associated with the state-socialist past. As a result, familiar practices and products are defended under the motto "not everything was bad about the GDR." New collective undertakings, like a women's silk-painting circle, demonstrate that "our way is nicer," and GDR consumer brands come back into vogue. Interestingly, Berdahl finds much continuity with the past here. As before, taste and conspicuous consumption drive social distinctions, even if cash is usurping connections in importance. These forms of "*Ostalgie*" (nostalgia for the East) are not unique to Kella, as Berdahl points out; however, what role the borderland plays is not always clear. One possibility is that close contact with Westerners makes reunification seem personalized. Thus, the new collective

inequalities strain villagers' relationships with their Western neighbors, leaving some of them feeling that they were more unified when the border was there. Westerners' well-meaning efforts at reconciliation often betray paternalism or worse, as when the mayor of neighboring Meinhard presents Kella with a street sign that reads "Meinhard: Subdistrict Kella" (p. 161).

Although Kella seems to stand in for all of eastern Germany at times, one clear difference is the deep symbolism of crossing the old border. Thus, in 1989, the first encounter Western houses, roads, and store windows is "like going back to the future" for the villagers, a reminder of what might have been, as well as what the future might bring. Among their first stops is the "window to Kella," that privileged vantage point from which Westerners had looked down on their Eastern kinfolk. For years thereafter, this spot becomes a kind of pilgrimage destination for Easterners. "Crossing the border," Berdahl argues, now symbolizes the transition itself, leaving villagers with the feeling of being somewhere between East and West, as well as with an identity as Easterners. This provocative point is illustrated during an evening stroll to the look-out, when two women remark that Kella will soon be "as good as any village in the West," whereas "the inland area [of eastern Germany] is supposed to be much worse" (p. 183). In Berdahl's interpretation, the women have embraced an identity of "in-betweenness" which accepts Western norms about the direction of change, but still sees them as Other. This vignette may explain why Berdahl does not believe border-crossing prevents the hardening of identities, as others have argued. Instead, the border-crossing routinizes transition as part of everyday life, inscribing interstitiality onto both the landscape and the villagers themselves (p. 232). Perhaps this is why the borderland creates "lucidity" and "clarity": it offers a sense of identity and place that reunification has been unable to provide.

By the end of the book, Berdahl has contributed a rich, engrossing portrayal of everyday life in the East German borderland and shown how boundaries and identities were reconfigured after reunification. One weakness, perhaps, is the uncertain concreteness of "*Zwischenraum*" itself. Initially, Berdahl distances her concept from the "exclusively metaphorical ... understanding of borders" that celebrates only ambiguity, deterritorialization, marginality, and the like (p. 8). Along the way, however, *Zwischenraum* is sometimes detached from the "contextual specificity" and "dense materiality" that makes it distinctive. Thus, during the socialist period, it turns out that the central dynamic of *Zwischenraum*—negotiating limits to state power—only "functioned more completely" in the borderland, while operating "in some form throughout the GDR" (p. 70). After reunification, the "literal borderland" (the Window to Kella) is similarly revealed to be a place where Kella's "in-betweenness" is merely "most visible," whereas it may also symbolize "'the transition' itself" (p. 183). While understandable, such departures leave one wondering whether we actually need a new concept here. In the end, *Zwischenraum* may be more similar to the traditional "borderland" than Berdahl believes. Although she asserts that ambiguous liminality and lucid particularism coexist there, it is equally plausible that East-West hybridity is deeply in tension with Eastern (and Western) essentialism, much as other borderland theorists might argue.

Nonetheless, the work makes an important contribution by illustrating a central paradox of postsocialism: that the 'transition' is imagined as a crossing of the border from East to West that is equated with a passage from past to future. If the book permits alternate interpretations, this too is to the author's credit. At its best, *Where the World Ended* integrates conceptual innovation with meticulous research and thereby exemplifies what transition ethnography is achieving.

Angela Bourke. *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story.* New York: Viking Press, 2000. 279pp, including chronology, notes index; contains maps, illustrations and photos. ISBN 0-670-89270-X. US$ 24.95 (cloth).

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On the evening of Friday, March 15, 1895, in Ballyvadlea, County Tipperary, Ireland, Michael Cleary, in the presence of family and friends, threatened, "Are you Bridget Cleary, my wife, in the name of God?" Twice,

she answered in the affirmative, but when she failed the ritual query the third time, Michael, supposedly believing that she was a changeling, stripped her to her chemise, doused her with paraffin oil, and set her alight. Bridget's final words. as revealed later, were, "Give me a chance," but her plea came too late. William Kennedy, one of the many onlookers who acquiesced to Cleary's treatment, cried, in the midst of pandemonium and smoke, "Mother, mother, Bridgie is burned!"

Expecting Bridget to reappear on a white horse three nights thereafter, Cleary awaited her at a "fairy fort" near his home. However, when it became clear that foul play had taken place, he surrendered. Within months, he was convicted of manslaughter. Most of the eight "accessories" received lesser sentences.

Angela Bourke's fascination with the infamous "Clonmel Tragedy" or "Tipperary Witch Trial" began in the early 1990's while teaching at Harvard University. Interpreting Irish legend as *Weltanshauung*, a pattern of thought which renders understandable the "stolen child" of William Butler Yeats and the "love talker" of William Allingham, Bourke drew attention to feminist codings in Irish folklore. That is to say, she believed that a domain, primarily or exclusively women's, existed in Ireland, whereby a common set of signifying practices and collective understandings could be showcased. The ritual of lament, or keen for the dead (*an caoineadh*), was a behavior wherein women's cultural beliefs could find expression. Not only a genre of grief and eulogy, the lament provided widows with an outlet through which they could "confess" domestic violence. Bourke suggested, too, that expressions such as "gone with the fairies" served revelatory functions, especially for those who inhabited marginal places and administered their own form of justice. Irish fairytales were not narratives of romance and nostalgia, as Celtic Twilight authors maintained, but cautionary tales on deviant women and just-so stories on terminally ill children. Bourke asked students to view fairy-bride abductions as rape scenes and rescues from fairy forts as rural Irish society's way of "turning a blind eye" to transgressive behavior.

Few narratives caught the author's imagination more than the burning of Bridget Cleary. In this book, she sets the case alongside the contemporaneous libel suit of Oscar Wilde in London, effectively demonstrating how both courtroom dramas amounted to media witch-crazes which served the interests of those opposed to the passage of a pending Irish Home Rule bill. Bourke argues that the improved political climate between colonizer and colonized regressed when British authorities showcased the bizarre behaviors of Cleary and Wilde to insist that the Irish were unable to govern themselves.

The question that dominates Bourke's analysis, however, is not the renewal of negative representations of the Irish as savage, childlike, and promiscuous. Rather, she asks how, in post-Famine, Enlightenment-dominated, highly Catholic Ireland, on the eve of the Twentieth Century, the abominable death of Bridget Cleary, at the hands of her husband and in the presence of family and friends, could have occurred. What constitutes the bulk of the book is the sensational minutiae of the case. It is clear from Bourke's analysis of extensive courtroom testimony and documentation that she accessed much primary data. Oral testimonies of doctor and priest, friend and relative, those accused and those who turned state's evidence, read like a "whodunit" or serialized mystery. Bridget Cleary's glamour and fine attire, her penchant for independence, her childlessness, and perhaps most important, her entrepreneurial success (an achieved status based on personal effort rather than an ascribed one based on kinship), are set against the characteristics of her less-plucky husband. He is depicted as unstable, impulsive, and somewhat of a ne'er-do-well. Photographs taken at his wedding, on the day of his sentencing, and on the occasion of his release, reveal a man with haunted eyes and serious demeanor. Readers get glimpses, too, of the notorious fireplace, the bed where herbs were administered to "bring Bridgie back," and the watery hole of her shallow grave.

Among these accounts, Bourke threads her vast knowledge of Irish fairy lore, unpacking issues pertinent to both sociology and anthropology. Vulnerable times, dangerous spaces, and liminal populations all come within her purview. Like E. E. Evans-Pritchard, she interprets witchcraft as an explanatory theory of causation. Searching for a metaphysical understanding of the Irish worldview, Bourke asks readers to see it as logical and consistent. What had begun for her as a set of hypotheses on folk behaviors of late 19th century Ireland hardens here into an axiomatic "read" on a system of belief running parallel with and in opposition to a world of rational English epistemology:

> Viewed as a system of interlocking units of narrative, practice, and belief, fairy legend can be compared to a database: a premodern culture's way of storing and retrieving

> information and knowledge of every kind, from hygiene and child care to history and geography (p. 33).

Bourke explains fairy belief as an imaginative and explanatory response rather than as a behavioral prescription or model. She argues that "vernacular stigma theory" is a way of labeling people not quite human, serving "to rationalize the ambivalence or hostility felt towards those who are different, as the Clearys certainly were" (p. 236). However, since this is the only known adult conviction for applying/acting out the imagined and narratively-embodied antidote to fairy abduction/witchcraft in Ireland, it would have benefited the reader to learn what prevented similar treatments in cases of other "afflicted" adults.

It strikes me that, like Clyde Kluckhohn, Bourke searches for psychological causes induced by tensions in intimate relationships and economic insecurities, and she finds gaps between ideals and practices. Like Marwick, she encounters charges of witchcraft among highly personal, face-to-face players; like Gluckman, she locates witchcraft accusations where no institutional—or formal religious—outlet for conflict-resolution exists. Indeed, Bourke quotes the local priest as testifying that he would be "the last to hear" about anything having to do with fairy faith (p. 182).

Bourke cites few anthropological sources, so it is difficult to know whether or not she is aware of classic theorists who have problematized the question of witchcraft (along with the aforementioned, one might name John Demos, Mary Douglas, Meyer Fortes, Godfrey Lienhardt, and Victor Turner). Factors that contribute to a rise in witchcraft allegations, such as social control, projection, socialization, strained communal relations, modernization, and technological advancement, have all been advanced. So, too, have suggestions that witchcraft tensions arise from competition over labor, inability to attain—or maintain—standards of living, and the devaluing of traditional religious forms. With her rich data, Bourke might have set the Clonmel witchburning within the context of this literature. Moreover, she might have drawn upon more contemporary treatments of witchcraft and religiosity in Europeanist anthropology, particularly the experientialist work of Tanya Luhrmann and Susan Greenwood in Great Britain. Brian Levack's extensive work on the witch trials of Europe deserves a mention, as does that of anthropologist Lawrence Taylor, whose theory on the occasions of Irish belief systems draws from the same fountain of Donegal legend and lore.

Locating the argument within those literatures, however, would have produced a very different book. As it stands, Bourke provides an overabundant, yet selective, reading of defendant testimonials, often assigning verisimilitude to them, rarely problematizing how they were constructed for jurisprudence. Neither does she acknowledge how indirect speech gave license to an entextualization of "the facts." It behooves remembering, too, that the Clonmel disaster took place a mere generation after the death by starvation of over a million Irish women and men; another million had emigrated to avoid a similar fate. Bourke mentions the Great Irish Famine briefly, referring to the consolidation of civil and ecclesiastic authority, and noting that patterns of deprivation took their toll on the working classes in post-Famine years. However, imputing too much difference between the Clearys and those with whom they interacted, the author fails to recognize that the couple functioned within a system of social relations that included priest, doctor, family and friends, all of whom visited them regularly. Bourke misses the realization that much of Ireland, continuing to experience the pangs of massive psychic trauma, existed in the throes of disconnectedness. The most vivid examples of this are manifest in the public's execration of the defendants at the onset of the trial, and its expression of sympathy toward them at the time of their sentencing.

Another oversight is Bourke's failure to address the language differential. Questions concerning the extent to which Irish was known and spoken in the district, and how social and demographic profiles were defined linguistically, bear consideration, especially in light of the shifting codes of prestige which gained sway after the Famine. The reader should have been apprised as to how fairy legend was recreated and transmitted linguistically, how cultural capital was assigned to the narrators, and by whom. Answers to similar important questions are conflated among Bourke's collection of forensics, and although attention to the murder-mystery aspect insures that the fairy faith in Ireland will provoke renewed interest, one fears that thrill-seekers will visit Tipperary's notorious environs for a plunge into the maelstrom of turn-of-the-century tabloid journalism. Undoubtedly, with the publication of this book, Bridget Cleary's narrative will continue to impact the Tipperary region, where it is may become increasingly common to hear the now-classic jump-rope rhyme:

Are you a witch or are you a fairy
Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?

Lonnie R. Johnson. *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 347 pp, including preface. Notes, index; contains maps, illustrations, and photos. ISBN 0-19-510071-9 US$ 30.00 (cloth).

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Any author who attempts a general survey of an area faces the chimera of distillation, which necessarily yields the possibility of omission; or at the very least opens that author to criticism from specialists interested in points condensed for the benefit of maintaining the integrity of the text. Johnson has found an excellent compromise, and provides the reader with chronology, narrative, and analysis in an eminently readable treatment of the area comprised primarily of contemporary Poland, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia.

The text pursues the basic developments of medieval Central Europe: conversion of the local pagans to Christianity, feudalism, dynastic constructions, malleable boundaries, alliances, misalliances, and warfare. It follows with the emergence of certain states of the region into the modern era, while others languished in second serfdom. It finishes with the tale of the twentieth century: two world wars, National Socialism, Communism, partition and the continued subjugation of much of the populace, the revolutions of 1989, and the problems facing the states of the region in the post-Communist period. The account is laden with personalities, successions, and explanation of events, and Johnson is adept at illustrating developments and circumstances. He places the reader in the setting, and builds context by which we can adjudge the evolution of the region, and better understand current developments there.

A couple of threads emerge early in the text, and prevail throughout. Johnson's caveat is that the medieval and early modern world can not be observed through a nationalist lens. Such latter-day constructions of identity, nation, conflict, and faith are inherently wrongheaded and misleading. The Romantic period has given us some popular and enduring misconceptions of the past, but if we judge antecedent times on their contemporaneous merits, a different, and perhaps clearer, picture will emerge. Misapprehension of the real underlying factors of the unions and conflicts and reforms of the medieval and early modern era leaves us with a tenuous grasp on the nature of current events in the region, and faulty generalizations ensue. Johnson emphasizes this point throughout the first eight chapters of the text, and his admonitions carry substantial weight in the current climate of historical and social scientific historiography. To wit: the current reliance upon what I call the 'time immemorial' hypothesis currently in vogue. Journalist interlopers, such as Robert Kaplan, Robert Cullen, and G.Y. yansky, historians, such as Lord Kinross and Noel Malcolm, politicians, such as Helmut Kohl, Slobodan Milosević, and Jörg Haider, are all advocates of this analytical nonsense. Rather than focus on the interwoven trajectories embarked upon by the peoples and nations of the region through the developments of centuries, these analysts assume the existence of nationalism which dates back millennia, and which has always dictated the struggles for identity, both national and personal. Recent forays into such muddled positing have centered on the disintegration of the former Yugoslavian state into its constituents parts, and the regional struggles between faith, ethnicity, and nationalism. These are all relegated to a generic and defective explanation a là chauvinist historian Rebecca West: "They have been fighting with each other since *time immemorial*. They will always fight with each other" (my emphasis). As Johnson points out, however, if we look to a deeper history of the region we can see that the restraints forced upon historiography by the nationalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are falsely placed.

Johnson's account situates Central Europe into its temporal, psychographic, and substantive contexts, and he integrates these approaches very well by providing a framework for the clarification of synchronic

events, personalities, and conditions extant in the region. There are several exceptional passages which delve into these approaches.

A very strong notion of the independence of thought and identity among inhabitants of Central Europe is woven into the text, and emerges in sharp focus to elucidate specific points. The knowledge of ideas, that is, what does the world know about Central Europeans and their ideas and perceptions of themselves, their neighbors and outlanders, is peppered throughout the narrative, and juxtaposed against traditional analytical approaches to the study of Europe. The psychography of the region is a necessary consideration: appreciating perceptions held allows us to develop a more objective and holistic understanding of the evolution of the area, including ethnic, social, and political compositions, and the exertions of these as they were, and are, arrayed against one another. One of the dilemmas we find in looking at 'the other Europe' (that is, the continent east of the Elbe and south of the Baltic Sea) is that it does not fit nicely into rôles heaved onto it by Marxist theory, center-periphery theory, world systems theory, conventional tripartite economic paradigms, post-modernist or deconstructionist models. A more comprehensive standard of analysis is necessary.

In conjunction with this, the chronological progression of the region must also be understood, but not simply from the standpoint of dates and times and eras. The Romantic period cannot be understood *sui generis*, but must be observed *in situ* if we are to grasp the origins and significance of technological developments, social transformation, religious and philosophical change, literary maturation, modification of political and economic structures and geographical borders, the shifting nature of allegiances in the vicinity, and subsequent reactions to the turbulence of such turmoil. The same can be said of the Enlightenment, the Reformation, the Hussies Revolutions, and any other significant upheaval. To attempt to understand outside of context is indicative of "the vacuity of the allegedly postideological world in which we live" (p. 85), and smacks of careless thinking, and shoddy analysis.

A theme often overlooked in general surveys is the extent to which the leadership of Europe was related and the impact this had on political motives and geographic imperatives. *Central Europe* contains excellent discussion of dynastic relations and the bearing of familial considerations, or lack thereof, on developments in Central Europe: the partitioning of Poland, second serfdom, ineptitude for the defense of the southern borders with the Turks, and so on. This book is not an ethnography, but Johnson does attempt (and succeeds with) an analysis of a somewhat local variety, including demographic information, the use and structure of power and influence, charisma as a motivator, and political-economic arguments for the trajectories of specific areas of the region.

There is also an implicit use of population ecology as an explanatory tool in this text. Little enough time is spent in contemporary anthropological literature in the explication of human behavior from an ecological perspective, and even less is spent in the articulation of the ecological imperatives which underlie human behavior and the resultant sweeps of human history. Johnson adesses, for example, the *ang nach Osten* for which Germany has become famous over the centuries. Prior authors have offered explanations for this ive to the east as "a primordial German imperialism" (i.e. expansion and conquering are somehow coded into the genetic material of every German); or as the result of "cosmic historical forces" (i.e. the Lord works in mysterious ways); or a "messianic" chauvinism for German culture (i.e. Germans are endowed with an innate superiority and they are compelled to pursue their destiny of vanquishing the neighbors). None of these, upon serious consideration, provide a reliable view of the comportment of Germans or any other group of people. Johnson nicely sums up the motivations behind the German expansion to the east as "basically the result of population pressures in the German empire combined with the presence of personal and economic opportunity outside the German speaking world" (p. 38). The essentials of population ecology rest upon the principle that choices are made by individuals, and aggregates of these choices can be seen as trends. Accurate behavioral analysis can follow, based upon these trends of decision-making. It is refreshing to encounter such clear thinking and analysis, and I commend Johnson for his understanding and use of an ecological paradigm in this book. Anthropology can certainly benefit from such efforts; far from determinism, the influence of our biological heritage is undeniably a factor in human behavior.

My only substantive objection is that Johnson devotes too much of the early text to explaining just exactly where and what and who Central Europe is. His justifications become a bit strident and loose knit, although he does bring his reasoning back to a relevant position. Such discussion is not invalid, of course:

quite the contrary. It is necessary to elucidate the primary geographical and historical focus for the purposes of the book, but it is my belief that this can be done much more efficiently than is so. Johnson travels a long and winding path through his defense of naming and demarcating the region; perhaps it would suffice to give the geographical delineations as he sees fit for his study, and a brief mention of the ethnic, linguistic, and political makeup of such a region. A short discussion of the concomitant problems might be warranted, but the depth of explanation in the book as it stands seems to me to be above what is necessary for the average consumer of such a survey.

There is one other mildly disappointing feature of this book, especially considering that it hails from Oxford publishing: The text, notes, and index contain numerous spelling and grammatical errors. These are not enough to distract from the overall presentation, but they do require amendment in subsequent editions of the book. I suspect that these errata arise from a reliance upon mechanical editing, rather than a careful perusal of the text by a human editor. Such is the mischief which can be made by technology.

If I may be allowed a suggestion: The publication date of *Central Europe* was 1996; it may be time for Johnson to consider a revision, with addenda specific to the last four or five years of post-Communist transition, especially as these changes pertain to his conclusions in the original volume. How have the states of the region fared most recently? How have new nationalist developments in Austria, Germany, Croatia, and Slovakia arisen, been explained, been dealt with? How have these developments been construed by politicians, dissidents, academics and outlanders? What new conclusions can be awn from the trajectories embarked upon in the last few years? What do neo-Communist election results indicate for Central Europe and its neighbors? What can we construe from these developments, or regressions, as the case may be?

Absent a review and expansion of his text by the author, the possibility of a new edition becomes an opening for future writing that elucidates the contemporary situations in which the countries of Central Europe find themselves. An in-depth analysis of the politics, economics and post-Communist development of the states of the region would be a useful addition to anthropological literature, especially if the ecological dimensions of the material details of recent regional history, ethnic identification, and the transition from centralized states and planned economies to democratic administration and market economies were the foundation for further study. As with all surveys, this text has limited value to the specialist of the region. For the student just arriving to Europeanist anthropology, however, it will provide an excellent introduction to the impressive diachronic matrix of events, circumstances, and personalities of the region. Coupled with additional texts relating to the remainder of Europe (such as Michael Herzfeld's *Anthropology through the Looking Glass* [1989] or Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* [1982]; areal considerations such as Marilyn Silverman and P. H. Gulliver's *Approaching the Past* [1992]; and for perspective on the current issues surrounding integration, Victoria Goddard et al.'s *The Anthropology of Europe: Identity and Boundaries in Conflict* [1994]), Johnson's *Central Europe* will serve as an excellent primer for classroom use. It also occurred, as I finished the book, that it had had a remarkable impact on me personally, and sparked a renewed interest in the area.

Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends is an excellent survey of the region during the last 1000 years, and will be a useful text for anyone interested in a concise, thorough and thoughtful approach to the history, geography, and peoples of the countries of Central Europe. Specifically for anthropologists, I believe the book's usefulness lies in its approach to explicating the cohesiveness of the region, despite prevalent assumptions about the divisiveness and anima of the peoples and nations of Central Europe toward each other. Deconstructive approaches and post-Modernism have forsaken much of the material concerns of ethnicity, society, politics and economy within Europe in general, and within individual countries of the Balkans and eastern or Central Europe specifically, in favor of a less uniform understanding and explanation of why these countries, regions, and peoples are as they are. Johnson's text is a refreshing reminder that history can serve as an analytical discipline; that it can contribute to anthropology; and that it can provide provocative commentary for anthropologists.